

Career Pathway Connections For Adult Learners

Moving the Needle on Service Integration



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Division of Workforce Development
and Adult Learning

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Introduction

Maryland’s workforce system partners are committed to reaching jobseekers who are most in need of employment and training services and barrier removal support that will help them succeed in family-sustaining careers. A variety of partner programs contribute to the network of services available through the workforce system, however, the six core programs under the first four Titles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) include:

- WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs
- WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy
- WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Services
- WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation

To meet our economy’s skill needs, we must ensure that workers with limited skills have access to high-quality education and workforce programs that can help them build their abilities, attain industry-recognized postsecondary credentials, and qualify for middle-skill jobs. This is particularly important for populations that may have been marginalized. Data from a rigorous international survey show that a full 40 percent of U.S. adults with low literacy skills fall in the lowest quintile of earnings.

[Skills in the States, Integrated Education and Training Policy Toolkit](#), National Skills Coalition

Workforce system customers can often benefit from the services of more than one of the WIOA core programs, and Maryland strives to ensure customers have access to all of the system’s services, regardless of which partner program initially serves them. The term “co-enrollment” is used to describe the concurrent enrollment of an eligible individual in two or more of the six core programs.¹ Co-enrollment can be a powerful strategy for assisting adult learners in WIOA Title II Adult Basic Education (ABE) or English Language Acquisition (ELA) programs in accessing the WIOA Title I employment and training services that can help them enter and grow in career pathways.

Maryland’s Department of Labor (MD Labor) invested over \$1.5 million of WIOA Governor’s Set-Aside funds in the competitive [Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners \(Career Pathways\)](#) grant program in 2018 and 2019 to expand use of the career pathways model and increase co-enrollment rates in WIOA Titles I and II. Five Local Areas and ten Title II educational partners representing diverse regions of the state were awarded funds under the grant to implement projects.

Report Purpose and Structure

This report was created to document the strategies, challenges, and best practices that emerged from the *Career Pathways* grant program to serve as a resource for other workforce entities interested in establishing similar initiatives. The report opens with background information on the design of Maryland’s *Career Pathways* grant program, statewide performance outcomes, and high-level overviews of the individual projects implemented by Local Area grantees. Following these sections, the report moves to its main focus, the results of in-depth interviews conducted with the project teams involved in implementing *Career Pathways* projects.

The Disconnect Between WIOA Titles I and II

About 25,000² Marylanders participate annually in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Acquisition (ELA) courses funded under the WIOA Title II program. Whether these individuals are English language learners (ELLs), have low levels of literacy, and/or lack a high school diploma, they enroll in Title II to gain the literacy and numeracy skills and educational credentials necessary to qualify for employment opportunities to achieve economic security for themselves and their families.

The WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs offer extensive employment and training services that are well-aligned with Title II program participants’ employment goals, however, co-enrollment of Title II students in Title I has historically been low. Some of this disconnect stems from the fact that students enrolled in Title II classes may not possess the minimum academic proficiency levels required to participate in Title I-funded job preparation courses and occupational skills training. The time commitment to complete months of lower-level academic coursework followed in lock-step fashion

1. Federal Register/Vol. 81 No. 161/Friday, August 19, 2016/Rules and Regulations, Based on the WIOA title II Final Rule.

2. The annual average of 25,000 ABE participants is based on data accessed on November 2, 2021 from the [Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education’s National Reporting System](#). Data tables include <https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/md/2016/table-4>, <https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/md/2017/table-4>, <https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/md/2018/table-4>, <https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/md/2019/table-4>, and <https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/md/2020/table-4>.

by occupational training may also be a significant deterrent or cause of attrition for adult learners with family and financial obligations.

Using Career Pathways to Close the Gap

Maryland’s Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners Program

Workforce training programs designed using the Career Pathways model expedite the process of preparing adult learners for careers by co-enrolling participants in WIOA Titles I and II by providing concurrent and contextualized education and training. These programs “emphasize assessment, academic and non-academic supports that adults need to complete their programs, and connections to employers.”³

Career Pathways programs across the nation are demonstrating the effectiveness of the model in helping educationally underprepared adult learners advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment.

To expand use of the Career Pathways model and increase co-enrollment in WIOA Titles I and II, MD Labor launched the competitive *Career Pathways* grant program in 2018. Demonstration project proposals were solicited from local partners with the objective of increasing co-enrollment in WIOA Titles I and II.

Program Goals and Implementation Strategies

MD Labor developed the *Career Pathways* Program with the following goals in mind:

1. Increase WIOA Title II adult learners’ access to WIOA Title I training and career opportunities;
2. Focus on meeting lower-level adult learners where they are in education-level and support them in meeting career goals;
3. Address the needs of businesses;
4. Expand career pathways through piloting one or more proven interventions;
5. Support the creation of a Maryland WIOA Co-Enrollment and Career Pathways Guide to facilitate the distribution of information related to best practices, successes, challenges, and more; and
6. Achieve sustainability once grant funds are exhausted or the project has ended through connecting to the [Maryland Eligible Training Provider List](#) or by other means.

To ensure proposed projects were based on proven best practices, MD Labor provided applicants with a menu of implementation strategies. Pilot projects were required to include one or more of the following interventions:

- Registered Apprenticeship
- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)
- English Language Acquisition
- Out-of-School Youth Pathways
- Distance Learning
- Transition Specialist Support
- Bridge Program

Detailed descriptions of the implementation strategies are available in the Appendix to this report.

Introductory Webinar

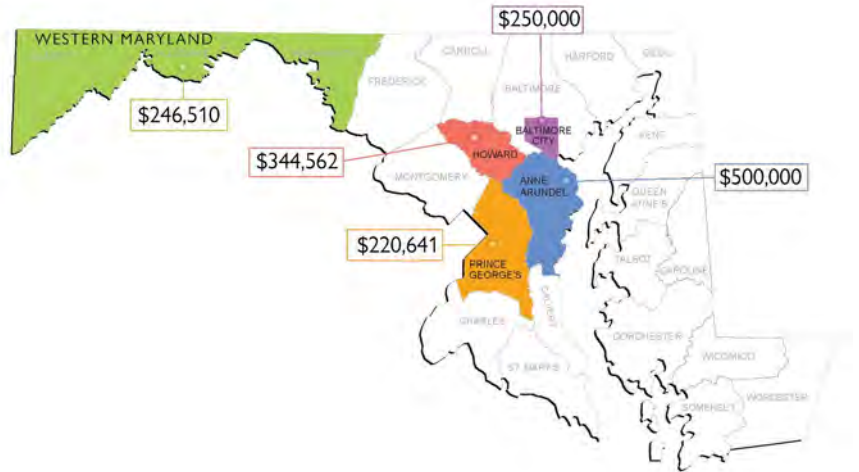
As part of the rollout of the grant program, MD Labor partnered with the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) (AECF) to present a webinar designed to familiarize prospective applicants with the features and benefits of the career pathways model. The webinar included technical assistance for Local Areas on best practices for implementing career pathways projects, including

3. “*Career Pathway Programs: Helping Low-Income People Increase Skills and Access Good-Paying Jobs*,” Washington, D.C., National Conference of State Legislatures, December 8, 2015.

examples of how workforce and adult education stakeholders are approaching career pathways across the nation and provided background on systems alignment to support career pathways.

Policy Guidance

MD Labor developed [DWDAL Policy Issuance 2018-08 Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners](#) to provide detailed guidance on project design and eligibility requirements, guidelines for outreach and recruitment, staff roles and responsibilities, data collection, etc.



Grant Awards

MD Labor solicited applicants for up to \$250,000 in funding to develop innovative demonstration projects with a consortium of local partners, including local Workforce Development Areas (Local Areas), adult education providers and business partners. Most of Maryland’s Local Areas applied for the funding. The state ultimately conducted three grant award cycles and selected seven career pathway projects from five Local Areas. Two of the five won grant awards in multiple grant cycles. The total awards are shown in the map above. The awards by grant cycle are listed in the table below:

Awards for the Three Grant Cycles

| Round 1 Awards | Round 2 Awards | Round 3 Awards |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED) Employ Prince George’s (EPG) Howard County Office of Workforce Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) Western Maryland Consortium (WMC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAWDC Howard Community College (Howard CC) |

Projects commenced on or after April 1, 2018.

State Outcomes

The table below displays statewide performance outcomes for the Career Pathways grant as of March 31, 2022.

| | State Total | State Goal | % Goal Achieved |
|---|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| # Served | 190 | 179 | 106% |
| # Co-enrolled in <i>Career Pathways</i> Projects and Title I | 190 | 179 | 106% |
| # Completing Training | 123 | 149 | 83% |
| # WIOA Approved Certificates and Certifications | 87 | 149 | 58% |
| Placement into Employment Following Training Completion (80% of Completers) | 118 | 118 | 100% |
| Of those placed into employment following training completion, are Employed QTR2 following Program Exit | 66 | 95 | 69% |

Program Implementation

The five Local Areas awarded grants under the *Career Pathways* program developed unique program designs aligned with their existing resources, organizational structures, and the needs of their target audiences. This section provides high-level overviews of each Local Area’s project.

AREA SERVED: Anne Arundel County

WIOA Partners: Title I: Anne Arundel Workforce Development Council (AAWDC) | Title II: [Anne Arundel Community College](#) (AACC)

Target Audience: Anne Arundel County hosted two *Career Pathways* projects funded by separate grants awarded during the second and third grant cycles. The first project targeted basic skills deficient⁴ participants and the second project targeted ELLs.

- Occupational Training Tracks:**
- Central Sterile Processor
 - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
 - Diesel Mechanic
 - Dental Assistant
 - Electrician Pre-Apprenticeship

Anne Arundel County's Career Pathways Project Model

TITLE I



AAWDC and AACC jointly conducted recruitment, eligibility and suitability assessments and case management, and communicated regularly to discuss participant progress. The team implemented an Integrated Education and Training (IET)⁵ /Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)⁶ approach.

AAWDC covered training costs for the Round II grant, provided Career Coaches who co-case managed participants, provided supportive and career services, and placed participants in employment.



EMPLOYER PARTNERS

Construction and Healthcare Industry Collaboratives convened by the AAWDC Workforce Development Board, along with the employer network maintained by AACC, provided guidance on industry demand for skills and considered qualified candidates for employment openings.

TITLE II



AACC covered training costs during the Round III grant, provided Success Coaches who co-case managed participants, and served as the liaison between the community college's continuing education program and AAWDC's workforce development program.

PARTICIPANTS



Participants concurrently received contextualized English language instruction, academic support and occupational training, with embedded essential skills instruction and career services. Students also completed clinical hours required by certification standards.

The Career Pathways project was Mary's launching pad for a promising healthcare career.

The Anne Arundel County *Career Pathways* project team almost decided not to select Mary to participate in their CNA/GNA training program. However, she won them over during her suitability interview. The team was impressed by her commitment and maturity. She was goal oriented about her career and enthusiastic about the opportunity. The team decided to include her in the next cohort, and their decision proved to be the right one. Mary took full advantage of the academic support classes to improve her academic skills and significantly improved her scores on the [Test of Adult Basic Education](#) (TABE). She also continued to demonstrate all of the positive qualities the team noted during her interview, maintaining regular attendance and successfully completing the training despite suffering two deaths in her family. After completing the CNA/GNA program, Mary went on to complete the Patient Care Technician (PCT) program as well. But Mary still wasn't finished setting career goals and going after them. She is currently enrolled in AACC's nursing program. Anne Arundel County's *Career Pathways* project made it possible for Mary to overcome initial low literacy levels and personal challenges and launch what will surely be a successful career in healthcare!

4. According to [Training and Employment Guidance Letter 17-05 Attachment B](#), the term "basic skills deficient" refers to an individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. In addition, states and grantees have the option of establishing their own definition, which must include the above language. In cases where states or grantees establish such a definition, that definition will be used for basic skills determination.

5. The term "Integrated Education and Training" means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. [WIOA 29 U.S.C. Sec. 203\(11\)](#)

6. The term "Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education" means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training. [WIOA 29 U.S.C. Sec. 203\(12\)](#)

AREA SERVED: Baltimore City

WIOA Partners: Title I: Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED) | Title II: [Baltimore City Community College \(BCCC\)](#), [Strong City Baltimore](#), [South Baltimore Learning Center \(SBLC\)](#)

Target Audience: Baltimore City’s project targeted individuals with basic skill deficiencies.

Occupational Training Track: Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Baltimore City’s Career Pathways Project Model

TITLE I



MOED and the Title II partners— BCCC, Strong City Baltimore and SBLC, jointly conducted recruitment and eligibility assessments and held regular meetings to discuss participant progress. The project implemented the IET approach.

MOED covered training costs, provided case management services, supportive services, career services, and employment placement.

TITLE II



BCCC, Strong City Baltimore and SBLC delivered weekly academic Skills Brush-Up classes contextualized with occupational training that included hands-on learning in an ambulance simulator purchased with grant funding.

PARTICIPANTS



Participants concurrently completed a contextualized academic Skills Brush-up course and occupational training. MOED integrated career services near the completion of the program. Employers offered students “ride-along” opportunities.

EMPLOYER PARTNERS



The [Baltimore City Fire Department \(BCDF\)](#) and [Hart to Heart Transportation](#) provided guidance on workforce needs, joined sessions with participants to discuss job requirements, participated in monthly check-ins with MOED Business Services representatives and considered qualified program graduates for employment opportunities.



The Classroom Ambulance

In addition to grant funding for training and career and supportive services, Baltimore City’s *Career Pathways* grant covered the cost of an ambulance simulator, to give participants the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in an accurate replica of a real ambulance. The simulator is a valuable instructional tool that allowed EMT students to familiarize themselves with the proper ambulance procedures in a low-risk environment. The simulator also exposed students to the challenges of working within the confined space. Although the Career Pathways project is over, the simulator continues to benefit students. It is stationed in a classroom at the Reisterstown Plaza campus of BCCC.

AREA SERVED: Howard County

WIOA Partners: Title I: Howard County Office of Workforce Development | Title II: [Howard County Library System](#) (HCLS), [Howard Community College](#) (Howard CC)

Target Audience: The Howard County Career Pathways project targeted ELLs.

- Occupational Training Tracks:**
- CNA
 - PCT
 - Ophthalmic Technician (Vision Tech)

Howard County's Career Pathways Project Model

TITLE I



Howard County conducted two projects: the Howard County Office of Workforce Development was the awardee in Round I and Howard CC was the awardee in Round III. The design for both projects followed the IELCE/ IET model. In both projects, the Howard County Office of Workforce Development, Howard CC and HCLS jointly conducted recruitment and eligibility assessments, made referrals, and shared case management duties. The partners met regularly to discuss participant progress.

Howard County Office of Workforce Development covered training costs for the Round I project, provided case management services, support services, career services integrated onsite with Title II coursework, and employment placement and follow-up.

Howard CC covered training costs on the Round III project. Howard CC and HCLS delivered sequential and concurrent courses in essential skills, career exploration, English language instruction, and contextualized occupational training. A Career Navigator posted at Howard CC served as the partner liaison.

TITLE II



PARTICIPANTS



Participants completed career exploration and essential skills training along with contextualized English language instruction and occupational training. Students also completed clinical hours required by certification standards.

EMPLOYER PARTNERS



The [Coalition of Geriatric Services](#) (COGS) provided input on high-priority essential skills and healthcare-related occupational training content. The group also referred qualified program completers to employment opportunities. In addition to COGS, both the Howard County Office of Workforce Development and Howard CC leveraged their extensive employer networks for support and employment opportunities.

Graduation picture from the Howard County Career Pathways project's second CNA cohort.



AREA SERVED: Prince George's County

WIOA Partners: Title I: Employ Prince George's (EPG) | Title II: [Prince George's Community College](#) (PGCC)

Target Audience: The Prince George's County Career Pathways project targeted ELLs.

Occupational Training Tracks: CNA and Apartment Maintenance Technician

Prince George's County's Career Pathways Project Model

TITLE I



EPG and PGCC jointly conducted recruitment and eligibility assessments, made referrals, and shared case management duties. The partners met and communicated regularly to discuss participant progress. Instructors provided biweekly reports to the project team. The project design followed the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model.⁶

EPG coordinated partner services, covered training costs, provided case management services, support services, integrated career services, and placed program completers in employment.



EMPLOYER PARTNERS

EPG maintains two industry advisory councils that were integral to the success of the project: the *Capital Area Healthcare Alliance* and the *Construction Works* council. Both employer groups advised on occupational demand, reviewed curriculum, and participated in recruitment activities and training. Select employers from these groups provided onsite learning opportunities at healthcare facilities and hired qualified program completers.

TITLE II



PGCC delivered cohort-based English language instruction integrated with contextualized occupational training and essential skills training using a co-teaching strategy.

PARTICIPANTS



Participants engaged in career exploration and completed job readiness program components. ELA instruction was integrated with occupational training in a single class environment. Depending on their occupational training focus, students completed clinical hours or participated in paid internships at employer sites.



Julia earns credentials and resumes work in a healthcare career.

Julia is a 61-year-old immigrant from El Salvador who participated in Prince George's County's *Career Pathways* project. Julia's background was in pedology, a branch of geology focused on the physical and chemical properties of soil. She worked as a teacher for many years in her country of origin, but her educational credentials were not accepted by employers in the United States, where she worked instead as a full-time nanny earning \$200 a week. Her work days were long, from early in the morning to late in the evening.

Becoming a participant in Prince George's County's *Career Pathways* project connected Julia to ELA resources and occupational training that allowed her to accomplish her dream of earning credentials and working in a professional environment in the United States. In her new role as a CNA/GNA, she has more than doubled her income as a full-time nanny. Julia expressed gratitude for the opportunity and continues to work on enhancing her English skills. She proudly states that "it's never too late to achieve your goals and make your dreams come true."

6. The state of Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program is nationally recognized as an evidence-based instructional model that supports career pathways. In an I-BEST program, two instructors are paired in the classroom - one to teach professional/technical or academic content; the other to teach basic skills in reading, math, writing or English language - so students can move through school and into jobs faster. [LINCS, State of Washington's I-BEST Model](#)

AREA SERVED: Western Maryland

WIOA Partners: Title I—Western Maryland Consortium (WMC) | Title II—[Allegany College of Maryland](#) (ACM), [Garrett College](#) (GC), [Hagerstown Community College](#) (HCC)

Target Audience: The Western Maryland project broadly recruited candidates from the populations targeted in Maryland’s [2020—2024 WIOA State Workforce Plan](#), including but not limited to: individuals with barriers to employment, veterans, displaced homemakers, returning citizens, individuals experiencing homelessness, youth who were in or had aged out of the foster care system, individuals who were English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy, individuals without a high school diploma, low income individuals, older individuals, and single parents.

Occupational Training Tracks: Training in industries and occupations identified as in-demand in the [Western Maryland’s 2020-2024 WIOA Workforce Plan](#) were eligible for support, including: education and health services, trades, transportation and utilities, leisure and hospitality, information technology, and manufacturing.

Western Maryland’s Career Pathways Project Model

TITLE I



WMC covered the cost of training and provided participants with career, support, and follow-up services. WMC also employed Transition Specialists in each of the three counties who worked with participants to customize their service plan and provide case management services. The Transition Specialists served as the liaisons between partners.

← WMC and the three Title II partners (ACM, GC and HCC) jointly participated in referring potential candidates to the program, participating in information sessions and eligibility assessments. The partners met and communicated regularly to discuss participant progress. →

TITLE II



ACM, GC and HCC provided adult basic education and English language instructional services. In some cases, training was delivered using a cohort model. The Title II partners worked with WMC to integrate essential skills and career services into training components.

PARTICIPANTS



Participants completed adult education and literacy, workforce preparation, and occupational training. Participants in healthcare tracks took part in cohort-based training. All participants worked with Transition Specialists to develop career plans and access supportive services.

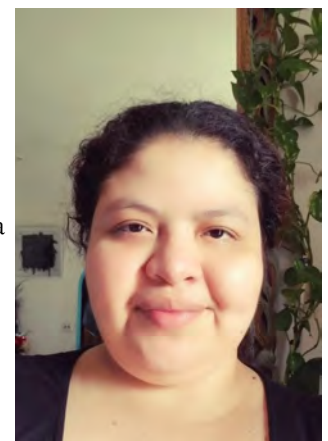
EMPLOYER PARTNERS



A large number of employer partners representing the targeted industries served as partners on Western Maryland’s *Career Pathways* project. Employer partners helped to refine the project team’s plans and considered qualified program completers for employment opportunities. In response to high employer demand for healthcare workers, the project team also worked closely on cohort-based training with home health provider [Optimal Health Care](#) and [Meritus Health](#), a local hospital.

The Career Pathways project is helping Zaira realize the American Dream.

Zaira arrived in the U.S. from El Salvador in 2008. In the early days, she worked in low-paying housekeeping positions while taking English classes, but by 2010 she had earned her CNA/GNA credentials. Her family grew in the years that followed, and with two young sons to support she was ready to take the next step in her career. Even though Zaira had a high school diploma from El Salvador, it was not recognized in the U.S. The WMC *Career Pathways project* provided Zaira with GED® tutoring that prepared her to successfully complete the GED® exam series and earn a Maryland high school diploma. At nearly the same time, she passed the U.S. citizenship exam and proudly became a U.S. citizen! But Zaira wasn’t done and neither was the WMC project team, which helped her access training to continue to grow in her career by becoming a Certified Medicine Aide. Zaira’s next goal is to pursue a nursing degree. Zaira’s determination and hard work are what the American dream is all about.



Voices from the Field

Introduction

The five project teams involved in implementing programs under the *Career Pathways* grant participated in extensive interview sessions to share information on their experiences on the following dates:

- Howard County—March 16, 2022
- Western Maryland—March 22, 2022
- Prince George’s County—March 29, 2022
- Anne Arundel County—March 29, 2022
- Baltimore City—March 30, 2022



Both Title I and Title II staff were invited to attend interview sessions. In most cases, the leadership of the Title I and Title II organizations, those responsible for designing and managing the projects, and staff who directly provided services to participants took part in the discussions.

Each interview session was structured around a series of questions that were developed to align with the goals set forth for the *Career Pathways* project. The questions and responses collected from project teams appear in this section, sorted by the related goals.

Survey Results

INCREASING CO-ENROLLMENT

1. What challenges did you face in recruiting participants based on the program structure?

Project teams needed to recruit beyond Title II classrooms to find participants who were a good fit for the program.

The *Career Pathways* grant program project teams agreed that it was not feasible to exclusively recruit project participants from ABE classes. The literacy levels of many individuals enrolled in ABE programs fell below the minimum threshold TABE score deemed necessary for them to be successful in the program’s occupational training component. Moreover, since most employers require applicants to hold a high school diploma, ABE students who were unable to earn their diploma before the end of their participation in the *Career Pathways* program would be difficult to place into employment, even if they were able to complete the occupational training. Project teams improved their recruitment success by expanding the potential pool to include recent graduates of Title II programs and other individuals with lower literacy skills based on TABE test scores.

A variety of factors needed to be balanced when recruiting ELL participants.

The teams whose projects focused on serving ELL participants found it challenging to identify individuals with the requisite combination of needs and strengths. One of the biggest recruiting challenges was the wide range of English language skills among candidates. Individuals with English language skills that fell below baseline TABE requirements were not selected because they would find it difficult to succeed in the occupational training component of the program. On the other hand, some candidates possessed professional expertise and credentials from their countries of origin that made them overqualified for the occupational training, despite being able to benefit from the English language instruction component.

Consider the audience when developing recruiting materials.

The project team recommended matching the complexity of the language in recruiting materials with the level of English skills in the target audience. Howard County’s Ophthalmic Technician program was slow to gain traction because the target audience didn’t understand what the occupation entailed. Once the project team recognized the problem and gave the occupation the simpler “Vision Tech” title, interest in the training opportunity rose.

The Prince George's County team discovered that individuals from other cultures may have negative preconceptions of certain occupations that can be difficult to overcome. The team's original plan was to recruit participants for training in Pre-Apprenticeships for Trowel Trades, Finishing and Glazing Trades, and Apartment Maintenance. However, once active recruitment was underway, the team discovered that interest in the proposed skilled trades occupations was low among the immigrant community, who regarded these jobs as dangerous. The sluggish response to recruitment efforts prompted the project team to revise the occupational focus of the training tracks. Ultimately, the team maintained the apartment maintenance track, but replaced the previously planned skilled trades occupations with CNA and GNA training.

Differences in Title I and Title II eligibility requirements were difficult for some staff to manage.

A significant number of Title II candidates could not participate in the program because they could not meet the more stringent Title I eligibility requirements. In some instances, candidates did not possess the required documentation. Even when they *did* have the documentation, they did not always provide it within the allowed time period. The project teams partially attributed slow response rates to candidates' previous experience with the Title II enrollment process, which has less documentation requirements for enrollment. Staff found they needed to conduct a substantial amount of follow-up to secure the documentation needed to qualify candidates for Title I enrollment.

2. How has this project impacted co-enrollment in your Local Area?

The project positively impacted co-enrollment in every Local Area where it was implemented.

All five project teams were unanimous in agreeing that the *Career Pathways* project helped them improve co-enrollment. Howard County reported that their *Career Pathways* project represented the first attempt the three Local Area partners (Howard County Office of Workforce Development, Howard CC and HCLS) had ever made to co-manage a grant project. Meaningful changes project teams introduced or strengthened through the *Career Pathways* project included:

- Holding regularly scheduled joint meetings of Title I and Title II staff;
- Maintaining an open line of communication via email and phone to ensure staff from both partners were apprised of updates regarding participants;
- Jointly participating in information/orientation sessions and eligibility assessment activities and decisions; and
- Sharing in and conferring on case management activities.

3. Did you identify any best practices for co-enrollment that you would encourage others to try for similar projects?

Two heads are better than one.

The joint participation of partners in the recruitment, assessment, referral, and case management processes expanded the range of possible solutions for customers and enhanced the quality, integration, and effectiveness of services.

Connect the two programs from the beginning.

Introducing Title I staff at the start of a Title II student's experience in ABE or ELA classes helped to establish a natural connection between the two programs from the very beginning. Prince George's County's project team was invited by PGCC to present on the *Career Pathways* program at numerous county-wide English language class registration sessions. These presentations resulted in a significant increase in co-enrollment. The new connections formed between the two partners as a result of the project have opened the door for Title I staff to offer career exploration courses to Title II students onsite at Title II locations.

Develop creative partnerships with community organizations that serve the target population.

To reach the immigrant population targeted for the grant and communicate the details of the program to a target population with limited English language proficiency, Prince George's County's project team developed a partnership with the [International Rescue Committee](#) (IRC), a local resettlement agency that serves refugees and asylees. The IRC provided

multilingual staff who assisted during information sessions by delivering live oral interpretation in four different languages and translated promotional fliers into multiple languages to attract participants with limited English proficiency. The project team also developed a partnership with [El Poder De Ser Mujer](#), an organization that empowers women and their families by motivating them to develop their full potential and talent. The organization provided career readiness training to later cohorts in Prince George’s County’s project.

MEETING ADULT EDUCATIONAL LEARNER NEEDS AND SUPPORTING CAREER GOALS

4. What specific changes did you make to your normal processes to improve access for adult learners?

Project teams introduced changes to meet participants where they were.

- All of the project teams physically met participants where they were by delivering Title I career services at the Title II service sites where ABE and ELA students were enrolled. Some Title II partners were similarly able to move selected services to Title I service points.
- Multiple project teams added academic support classes aligned with the occupational training to help participants bridge knowledge gaps. In cases where these classes were developed for ELL participants, ELA instructors and occupational training providers collaborated on content development to ensure occupational terminology was reinforced.
- Registering in the Maryland Workforce Exchange is generally regarded as a “self-service,” but project teams working with the ELL population found that participants could be overwhelmed and confused when left to complete the registration process on their own. Instructor-led classes were added to give ELL participants hands-on support.
- Project teams created liaison roles to coordinate services and help participants efficiently access the resources of both programs. Whether the liaison role was seated on the Title I or Title II side varied by project.



Anne Arundel County

- ELL participants frequently benefitted from a more intensive level of support in career services. For example, Anne Arundel County’s Career Coaches (Title I—AAWDC) and Success Coaches (Title II—AACC) noticed that participants found it difficult to revise a resume based exclusively on written feedback. Staff modified their approach and worked with participants one-on-one to coach them through the revision process. Staff also engaged in extensive practice interview sessions with participants to help them build their confidence.
- Anne Arundel County’s project team commented that, because of the intensive level of personalized support staff provided to participants, their team strived to introduce efficiencies wherever possible. One strategy the project team developed was sending out tailored group emails with relevant information and motivational messaging to provide participants with encouragement and direction. AACC staff also posted motivational videos for students on the learning management system on a weekly basis.

Howard County

- Ordinarily, Howard County’s procedure in AJCs is to rotate Workforce Development Consultants. Customers are served by whichever Consultant is available at the time of their visit. This standard procedure was altered for participants in the *Career Pathways* project, who were always served by an assigned case manager. The service modification reduced the need for ELL participants to have to explain the reason for their visit to multiple staff and strengthened continuity of service.

Prince George’s County

- Prince George’s County’s project team adjusted the schedule, location, and design of their information sessions for the *Career Pathways* program to make the events more accessible and relevant to the target audience. EPG found that immigrants with limited English proficiency who were working in survival jobs found it difficult to attend information

sessions at the times and locations where these sessions were typically run. The project team moved information sessions to the evening and offered offsite sessions in the communities where members of the target audience lived to improve access.

- The project team also modified the content presented during information sessions, introducing topics typically scheduled for later in the service cycle. Although EPG does not usually cover labor market information during the initial information session, they discovered that candidates for the *Career Pathways* program were very interested in understanding the demand for occupations and the associated earnings potential. The project team added an assessment of employment barriers during the information session as well, rather than waiting until a later in-depth assessment to broach the subject. As a result, the team was able to identify and quickly address issues that helped participants succeed. For example, during a discussion of employment barriers at an information session, candidates expressed confusion regarding how the American employment process works. The project team was able to connect candidates with AJC workshops on interviewing skills and subsequently scheduled mock interview sessions to help participants gain a clearer understanding of the cultural differences around the U.S. employment process.

5. In the Local Area's project, were there any notable employment successes in meeting adult learners' educational needs and supporting their career goals that emerged as best practices?

Involve employers to the fullest extent possible.

- Anne Arundel County's project team noted that AAWDC (Title I) and AACC (Title II) had previously built a close working relationship during the Local Area's participation in the [*Accelerating Connections to Employment*](#) "ACE" grant. The partners continued best practices first introduced during ACE in the design of the *Career Pathways* project, such as embedding Title I career services in occupational training.
- EPG leveraged the *Construction Works* industry council to provide support for the apartment maintenance training program. A national property management organization with a seat on the *Construction Works* council recommended a group of employers working to meet diversity goals in hiring. EPG negotiated with the employers to establish an agreement to place participants who completed all of the coursework and passed the certification exam in paid Residential Engineer externships, which were essentially on-the-job interviews for permanent positions. The EPG Business Consultants who staffed the *Construction Works* and the *Capital Area Health Care Alliance* industry councils informed the business members associated with these committees of the *Career Pathways* project and the training initiatives under consideration, and inquired about their specific hiring needs and skill requirements. Occupational training instructors and the EPG Career Consultants used this information to guide the design of programs. Some employers expressed interest in being the first to view the resumes of the program completers.

6. Did you encounter any challenges to achieving this goal, and if so, were you able to overcome these challenges?

Project teams serving ELLs spent many hours helping participants build confidence during practice sessions.

- The Howard County project team observed that *Career Pathways* participants who were ELLs sometimes lacked confidence and were less participative during job fairs, allowing other AJC jobseeker customers who were fluent English speakers to garner more attention from employers. To help participants build their confidence and assert themselves in conversations with employers, the Workforce Development Consultants conducted numerous practice sessions before job fairs. The team additionally reserved the first hour of job fairs solely for *Career Pathways* participants.

Hiring practices in other countries vary from U.S. practices.

- There were instances where immigrant participants did not fully understand American work culture. For example, some assumed, based on practices in their country of origin, that required employment documents, such as tax and identification forms, were optional rather than mandatory. Similarly, some participants were confused about the role interviews have in the U.S. hiring process: in their countries of origin, if a person was sent to speak with an employer it was often because they already had the job. The project teams needed to reinforce the importance of providing requested

documents to employers and clearly explaining the steps involved in the employment process.

Some participants faced issues that were beyond the scope of the program.

- Although participants may have been provided all of the resources they *should* need to succeed, some nevertheless struggled due to dispositional barriers that were difficult to address within the scope of the project. These barriers might have been a lack of maturity, organizational skills, or readiness to fully commit to a course of action.
- As Baltimore City’s project progressed, the team discovered that some students had learning disabilities, and some suffered from test anxiety or other barriers that impacted their ability to succeed in the EMT training program. The test anxiety issue posed an especially challenging barrier, because there were chapter tests every two weeks in the program and the EMT exam did not offer accommodations.
- Multiple project teams reported issues with participants struggling to carve out the significant time and energy needed to succeed in rigorous training programs while also meeting other work and family obligations. Supportive services were helpful in retaining students, but not all of the barriers could be addressed with the available resources.
- The Howard County and Western Maryland project teams reported situations in which participants in the healthcare training tracks followed faith traditions that constrained them from physically touching patients of a different gender. Western Maryland developed the clever workaround of placing the participant with a home healthcare agency that could assign the person exclusively to patients of the same gender.

ADDRESSING BUSINESS NEEDS

7. How did the Title I and Title II partners bring businesses to the table to discuss a blended work and learn process?

Anne Arundel County

- Both AAWDC and AACC maintain strong relationships with the business community. AAWDC maintains five industry collaboratives that bring together employers in healthcare, information technology, transportation, construction and hospitality. The project team tapped the industry collaboratives to provide labor market information, curriculum guidance, and employment opportunities throughout the life of the projects.

Baltimore City

- The Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) was involved from the beginning of Baltimore City’s *Career Pathways* project, helping the project team understand their hiring needs. BCFD visited classes throughout the training period and was also at the table at the back end of the project to consider qualified program completers. A private ambulance company, Hart to Heart, also had openings for participants.

Howard County

- During the design phase of the project, the Howard County team contacted Coalition of Geriatric Services (COGS), an employer network of professionals serving older adults in central Maryland. The Howard County team shared information on the proposed project and sought input from the membership regarding workforce needs. In addition to training content directly related to occupational training, the team conducted a poll of COGS members to determine which essential skill they most valued in employees. The top six essential skills identified in the poll were integrated into the career exploration component of the program. COGS members were among the employers who hired program graduates.

As program participants neared completion of coursework, business service representatives in roles at the AJC and Howard CC leveraged existing relationships with area healthcare providers to connect program participants with employment opportunities. The Howard CC representatives on the project team noted that in addition to building a new level of partnership with Title I and HCLS staff, they also made new discoveries about other resources within their own organization. For example, they learned that Howard CC has business services staff outside of the Title II program who

maintain a strong network of business connections with numerous healthcare employers in the region.

Prince George's County

- EPG maintains industry advisory councils for the high-demand sectors in the Local Area. The *Capital Area Healthcare Alliance* is EPG's industry advisory council for healthcare & social assistance industries, and the *Construction Works* council serves a similar role for construction and skilled trades. These councils provided guidance on occupational demand, participated in information sessions, reviewed curriculum, and were involved throughout the training process. A subset of the employers offered shadowing opportunities for students and interviewed and hired qualified program graduates. Employers from the *Alliance* attended information sessions to talk to candidates about the industry and visited during training to talk to participants about the work, the wages, etc.

Western Maryland

- The Western Maryland Consortium's targeted industries and occupations spanning several areas that involved a variety of employers. For healthcare focused occupations, the Workforce Solutions team and HCC partnered with [Optimal Health Care](#) early in the project and [Meritus Health](#) later on. Optimal Health Care was involved in all partnership activities, and agreed to interview qualified candidates. Meritus joined as a partner later in the project and interviewed qualified applicants.

8. How did Title I partners work with businesses and learners/jobseekers after placements? Were any additional supports needed?

Projects provided funding to cover the costs of repeat examinations.

A few participants in Anne Arundel County's Career Pathways project either did not successfully pass the certification exam on their first try or were unable to take a scheduled exam at the last minute due to illness. The project covered the costs for these individuals to reschedule a second attempt.

Participants who needed to strengthen their language skills remained enrolled in ELA classes.

There were a number of program participants who were job-ready and placed in employment but still needed additional English language skill development. These individuals continued to access ELA instruction to build their language proficiency.

Projects offered participants memberships in professional organizations.

The Prince George's County project covered the cost of memberships in the [National Association of Health Care Assistants](#) (NAHCA) for the last cohort of CNA training participants. NAHCA membership includes access to the NAHCA Virtual Campus, a distance learning platform that offers continuing education in areas such as communication, team building, and problem-solving. The membership also includes a newsletter and e-magazine that provides resources and news on upcoming events in the industry.

INTERVENTIONS TO EXPAND CAREER PATHWAYS

9. If you utilized co-teaching as an instructional strategy, how did you support cooperating instructors?

Prince George's County was the only Local Area that implemented co-teaching as an instructional strategy.

Co-teaching requires training, experience and funding.

In the co-teaching model, a content instructor and an ELA instructor are in the class at all times. Ensuring a positive working relationship between the two professionals is paramount to the success of the program. Paid time must be reserved to build the relationship between the two instructors before the class starts, and to maintain the relationship throughout the course. Both instructors need to have a clear understanding of their role and the goals of the model. Funding must be dedicated to supporting the additional joint work needed to coordinate instruction. The project team frontloaded about six to eight hours of paid planning time for the instructors to review curriculum, verify student levels through assessments, etc. For every three-

hour class, both instructors received one hour of planning. The additional planning time created a substantial additional expense. Some members of the project team felt that instructors needed more training in the co-teaching model and more time to prepare than was feasible with the funds and time provided in the grant.

It took time to familiarize training providers with the co-teaching model.

Occupational training providers who were already unfamiliar with teaching students with limited English language skills were somewhat concerned about the co-teaching model. The project team reported investing considerable time working with the training providers to clarify how the co-teaching approach worked. Despite initial concerns, the intensive involvement of ELA instructors in classroom activities helped the occupational training providers to feel more comfortable, and the students were so persistent in trying to learn and succeed that training providers who may have been initially skeptical developed confidence.



10. Additional costs aside, is co-teaching a model you and partners will continue to use?

The Anne Arundel project team implemented co-teaching as part of a previous grant and elected not to employ the same strategy in their *Career Pathways* project because of the added time, expense, and training required. Both the Anne Arundel and Prince George's County project teams agreed that the ability to incorporate co-teaching is predicated on the availability of funding to support the high costs associated with the strategy.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

11. Overall, what were the most significant challenges to the project's success? (e.g., procurement related delays? Working with learners with very low levels of literacy? etc.?)

- Project teams unanimously agreed that they found it challenging to identify candidates with language and occupational skill levels that were both a good fit for the training offered through the *Career Pathways* program.
- Additional support was needed for occupational training providers who had never previously worked with the ELL population.
- It could take more time than anticipated to recruit enough participants to run a cohort-based training. When participants were enrolled and excited about getting started on the scheduled date, it was hard to disappoint them with the news that the start date had been delayed. Some participants were not able to work with the new schedule and dropped out. COVID-related shutdowns further exacerbated the issue.
- A large number of warehouses and factories are located in the Western Maryland region that offer high wages. For some in the target populations, employment opportunities with these businesses were more appealing than the training programs offered through the *Career Pathways* project. It was difficult to compete with these opportunities, particularly for individuals who needed to support their families.
- The most significant challenge for all project teams was managing grant projects during the pandemic.

12. What did projects do differently because of the pandemic?

Anne Arundel County

The project team moved many program components online, but the transition to a virtual model did not solve every problem. CNA students were not able to complete their clinical hours onsite in a healthcare facility as they usually would, so AACC created a mock clinical setting using space made available at AACC. Dental Assistant internships normally completed at worksites were also impacted by widespread closures.

The project team required all participants in the allied health tracks to be vaccinated, based on the reasoning that being vaccinated was likely to be a condition of employment for healthcare-related employment opportunities. Candidates who were not willing to meet the vaccination requirement were not selected to participate in the program.

Program completers for the CNA training track encountered very long delays in receiving their certification exam scores. The [Maryland Board of Nursing](#) was running three to six months behind in scoring exams because of the pandemic. Fortunately, Governor Hogan’s COVID –19 [State of Emergency declaration](#) sanctioned a temporary freeze of normal licensing requirements to relieve severe staffing shortages, so many employers were willing to conditionally hire participants based on their completion of training.

Baltimore City

As an urban center, Baltimore City was hit especially hard by the pandemic. Extended shutdowns impacted the ability of participants to complete occupational training and accumulate required clinical hours. Despite this, some participants were able to secure a provisional certification, enabling them to work in the field.

Howard County

The pandemic reduced the number of candidates recruited through outreach and marketing efforts, resulting in a smaller number of participants in cohorts than had been originally anticipated. Classes shifted from an in-person to a virtual format whenever possible, but this shift exposed digital literacy deficits among some participants that impacted their ability to participate. Program staff were called upon to provide additional support. The Vision Tech training included a clinical practicum that required participants to be physically close to their clients at a time when social distancing was encouraged. Planned in-person events, such as job fairs, had to be canceled and the project team had to quickly develop alternative approaches to connecting participants with employment opportunities.

Prince George’s County

When pandemic-related shutdowns closed in-person classes, the project team moved instruction online. Participants were given tablets to continue working in the new online format. The healthcare-based occupational training moved certain instructional components online, but continued to run some components in person, including labs and onsite clinicals. The healthcare facility required students to wear personal protective equipment and tested students for COVID on a weekly basis.

Western Maryland

The project team shifted courses to a virtual setting to continue training during shutdowns. The Career Pathways project provided participants with laptops and covered the cost of internet “hot spots” to ensure internet connectivity.

13. What were the biggest positive and negative takeaways from the project?

The Positive Takeaways

- The career pathways model opened up access to occupational training and career advancement that would not have been available to the target population otherwise.
- The *Career Pathways* program increased the number of co-enrollments in every Local Area that hosted a project and helped Title I and Title II staff create and enhance processes and practices that will live beyond the life of the grant.
- The liaison roles were essential to optimizing work across partner organizations.
- Excellent communication is at the heart of effective collaboration. Title I and Title II partners benefited from establishing regular meeting schedules and communication protocols to ensure all partner staff were up-to-date on the status of participants. Anne Arundel County and Western Maryland both developed virtual systems that they continue to use. These systems allow partners to easily access information on participants in secure case notes repositories. Western Maryland’s system goes beyond the Title I and Title II partners, offering access to all of the partners in the local workforce system. A variety of partners can use the system to quickly assess who last served a customer, what those services are, and whether the customer has been referred to any additional services.
- A team-based approach to service delivery that includes all partners yields the best service integration and participant outcomes.

- Employers who are included throughout the training process are more confident about the value of the training and more invested in the success of participants.
- Building creative partnerships with community organizations that serve the targeted populations can open up a wide range of resources that add great value to workforce system initiatives.
- The selection of occupational training should be based on employer demand, but it should also consider the interests of the prospective participants. Entities interested in implementing similar projects should seek input from adult learners *before* committing to occupational training, to be sure they will be open to the employment opportunities for which the proposed training will prepare them.
- Sometimes resources are hiding in plain sight. The Howard CC representatives on Howard County’s project team discovered during the *Career Pathways* project that Howard CC has business services staff outside of the Title II program who maintain strong relationships with numerous healthcare employers in the region.

The Negative Takeaways

- Co-teaching is expensive and requires more training than could be secured with the funding available in the grant.
- The initial focus of the *Career Pathways* grant on exclusively recruiting participants from the pool of individuals enrolled in ABE courses was too restrictive. Opening eligibility to a broader range of candidates using TABE scores as the basis for participation made more sense and provided better candidate pools.
- Providing participants with laptops and internet connections may make it possible for them to engage virtually, but if they lack basic digital literacy skills, tools can only help so much.

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY

14. If the project was successful in increasing co-enrollment, how does the Local Area plan to sustain the effort?

Without exception, the Local Areas that participated in the *Career Pathways* program agreed that the experience increased the amount and quality of interactions between Title I and Title II partners. Multiple project teams used the word “intentionality” to describe the improved focus the *Career Pathways* projects helped them develop on leveraging the resources of both partners to support adult learners. Project teams were confident that participating in the grant left them a better position to promote and support co-enrollment.

Close and regular communication helped project teams gain a more holistic understanding of their workforce system. Most of the project teams maintained the regular scheduled meetings and expanded them to team-manage participants in a variety of programs beyond the *Career Pathways* project. Both Anne Arundel County and WMC plan to maintain the tools they developed to support partner communications.

In some cases, partners learned about new opportunities for future collaboration as a result. For instance, Howard County’s team plans to explore how HCLS funding might be leveraged to generate interest and increase enrollment in adult education programs offered through Howard CC, as well as occupational programs offered through the AJC.

All of the project teams recognized value in the liaison role. The Howard County project team plans to maintain the dedicated Career Navigator role to serve as a partner liaison. The WMC plans to continue the practice of their Transition Specialist visiting the Title II ABE and ELA classes to help students become aware of and access AJC services and resources. They will also continue to maintain the Path2help.com service directory tool to support partner communications.

As a direct result of EPG’s experience with the *Career Pathways* program, they established a [*Career Pathways for All*](#) (CPfA) program, which is specifically designed to serve immigrants, ELLs, refugees, asylees, and those living in their households. Individuals enrolled in the CPfA program are co-enrolled in one of EPG’s industry bridge programs to connect them with industry training, certifications, and employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The state's Labor Department created the *Career Pathways* grant program in service to one of the central goals of WIOA—to build an integrated workforce system that provides customers with access to the services of *all* the partner programs, regardless of which program is the entry point. Specifically, this grant program sought to increase the co-enrollment of Title II adult and English language learners in WIOA Title I. By promoting the integration of Title I employment and training resources with Title II educational services, the *Career Pathways* program was designed to improve and expedite students' paths to family-sustaining careers.

Statewide outcomes on WIOA performance indicators point to the conclusion that grant activities were successful in achieving the grant program's goal.⁷ Although final performance data was not yet available as of the publication date for this report, an impressive 106% of the goal for number served and number co-enrolled had already been reached. Pandemic-related issues as divergent as vaccine hesitancy and extended delays at licensing boards contributed to below-goal performance for the number of participants who completed training (83% of the state's goal) and the number who earned WIOA-approved certificates and certifications (58% of the state's goal). Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the health emergency, 100% of participants who completed training were placed into employment. Of this group, 69% were still employed in the second quarter following their exit from the program. The dedicated workforce professionals whose hard work and expertise made these positive outcomes possible can be proud of the impact their projects have had on the lives of countless Marylanders.

While positive outcomes on performance measures tell part of the story, they fall far short of fully capturing the value of the *Career Pathways* program. The project teams from every participating Local Area reported that the program made it possible for them to connect adult learners with Title I training opportunities who might not otherwise have been able to participate. The teams also universally agreed that the intensive working relationships established between the staff of the two programs improved their understanding of partner services, eligibility criteria, and data collection practices.

Moreover, the *Career Pathways* program helped Local Areas introduce enduring changes that will live beyond the life of the grant. Local Area grantees consistently stated that implementing the *Career Pathways* projects helped them develop a new level of intentionality with respect to co-enrolling Title II students in Title I services. All of the project teams adopted concrete changes to operations, such as scheduling regular visits from Title I staff at Title II sites to provide students with access to employment and training services. Titles I and II partners instituted liaison roles dedicated to facilitating communication between partners and put processes and practices in place to support regular communication regarding shared customers, including standing meetings to plan effective service integration.

In addition to enhancing communication practices and expanding points of service, staff involved in the *Career Pathways* projects offered the following recommendations based on their experiences:

- Recruitment efforts are more effective when promotional materials are written at a level the target audience can understand, outreach events are offered at times and in locations the target audience can access, and training opportunities are available in occupational areas the target audience will find appealing.
- Establishing the connection between Titles I and II services early and maintaining the connection throughout training builds an organic connection between the two programs that naturally promotes increased co-enrollment rates.
- Expanded and diversified partnerships can reveal new resources. Entities interested in pursuing similar initiatives are encouraged to explore potential partnerships with community organizations that serve the target population and new internal partnerships with units that have aligned goals.
- Meet participants where they are. Depending on the needs of participants, this could include a variety of strategies, such as providing greater hands-on support for activities that might traditionally be viewed as self-service areas, and/or

⁷ Current performance metrics for the *Career Pathways* program are available on Labor's Career Pathways webpage, at www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/careerpathways.

incorporating modifications in the project design to help participants build confidence.

- Involving employers as early as possible in the process of developing a *Career Pathways* program and including them throughout training to the fullest extent possible will improve the quality of the program, increase employer investment in the success of the students, and produce program graduates with competitive skills.
- The co-teaching strategy integrated in the I-BEST model has pros and cons that should be considered in advance. The model can be highly effective for meeting the needs of adult learners and expediting their journey to a career, but it is also undeniably expensive and complex to implement. Co-teaching requires a high level of training for instructors. It may also be unfamiliar to training providers and employer partners.
- Be flexible. It is impossible to plan for every eventuality. Candidates may not be a good fit, either because they have literacy levels that are too low or because they are too professionally accomplished. Promising participants may need to drop out if a cohort start date is delayed due to low enrollments. A pandemic might happen.
- Challenges really can become opportunities. When the pandemic upended original *Career Pathways* project design plans based on in-person training, Local Areas converted content to an online format. In addition to maintaining training services, the modifications opened an opportunity to help students build digital literacy skills.

Prevailing through every unanticipated turn in the road, the workforce professionals who participated in *Career Pathways* projects demonstrated that they are creative, indefatigable problem-solvers. Maryland businesses and jobseekers are the ultimate beneficiaries.

APPENDIX—INTERVENTIONS / IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following list of interventions/implementation strategies appear in [DWDAL Policy Issuance 2018-08 Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners](#).

Registered Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven model of job preparation that combines paid on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction to progressively increase workers' skill levels and wages. Registered Apprenticeship is also a business-driven model that provides an effective way for employers to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. It allows employers to develop and apply industry standards to training programs, thereby increasing productivity and the quality of the workforce. As an “earn and learn” strategy, Registered Apprenticeship offers job seekers immediate employment opportunities that offer sustainable wages and advancement along a career pathway. Graduates of Registered Apprenticeship programs receive nationally-recognized, portable credentials, and their training may be applied towards further post-secondary education.

All Registered Apprenticeship programs consist of the following five core components:

- 1. Business Involvement** – Businesses are the foundation of every Registered Apprenticeship program. The skills needed for workforce success, provided through business input, form the core of the model. Businesses must play an active role in building Registered Apprenticeship programs and are involved in every step of their design and execution.
- 2. On-the-Job Training** – Every Registered Apprenticeship program includes structured OJT. Companies hire apprentices and provide hands-on training from an experienced mentor. This training is developed by mapping the skills and knowledge that the apprentice must learn over the course of the program to become fully proficient at the job.
- 3. Related Instruction** – Apprentices receive Related Instruction or classroom style training that complements the OJT. This instruction helps refine the technical and academic skills that apply to the job. Related Instruction may be provided by a community college, technical school or college, an apprenticeship training school, non-profit, community-based organization (CBO), industry, labor organization, business association, or by the business itself. The instruction can be provided at the school, online, or at the work site.
- 4. Rewards for Skill Gains** – Apprentices receive increases in pay as their skills and knowledge increase. Progressive wage gains reward and motivate apprentices as they advance through training and become more productive and skilled at their job.
- 5. National Occupational Credential** – Every graduate of a Registered Apprenticeship program receives a nationally recognized credential, referred to as a Certificate of Completion. This portable credential signifies that the apprentice is fully qualified to successfully perform an occupation. Many Registered Apprenticeship programs, particularly in high-growth industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and transportation, also offer interim credentials as apprentices master skills as part of their career pathway.

Pre-Apprenticeship

Pre-Apprenticeship programs provide instruction and training to increase math, literacy, and other vocational and pre-vocational skills needed to gain entry into a Registered Apprenticeship program. Implementing Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship models that are aligned with the needs of key industry sectors creates opportunities for students, job seekers, and workers along the talent pipeline. To meet the official USDOL definition of Pre-Apprenticeship, a program must have a documented partnership with at least one Registered Apprenticeship to ensure Pre-Apprenticeship graduates are able to successfully enroll in a Registered Apprenticeship program upon completion.

Pre-Apprenticeship programs generally consist of the following:

- Training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the local economy;

8. The U.S. Department of Labor now refers to Related Technical Instruction (RTI) as Related Instruction, as seen in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Department of Labor Only Final Rule. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15975.pdf>

- Access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services, directly or indirectly;
- Hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options, and understanding how the skills acquired through coursework can be applied toward a future career;
- Opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential; and,
- A partnership with at least one Registered Apprenticeship program that assists in placing individuals who complete the Pre-Apprenticeship program into a Registered Apprenticeship program.

Integrated Education & Training

Integrated Education and Training (IET) is a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, for the purpose of educational and career advancement. The program must be a part of a career pathway and have a single set of learning objectives. The three components that need to be offered concurrently are adult education and literacy; workforce preparation activities, and workforce training.

Examples of IET models include:

- **Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)** – This model pairs two instructors in the same classroom at the same time. One instructor is responsible for the delivery of workforce content and is likely an industry subject matter expert. The second instructor oversees basic education or English Language support. This model also introduces basic academic skills to students in context to the vocational pathway the student has chosen and provides opportunities for the students to access and improve their soft skills;
- **Alternating Teachers / Companion Courses** – This model involves two classes (a basic skills class and a technical skills class) with two different instructors, a basic skills instructor and technical skills instructor. The basic skills or English language class is typically taught concurrently with vocational training, but the instruction is delivered separately (not through co-teaching like the I-BEST model). Students may attend this contextualized support session once per week or do a morning/afternoon schedule;
- **Vocational English as a Second Language/Vocational Adult Basic Education (VESL/VABE) specific classes** – This model involves specific classes that have the entire class focus on targeted content, use contextualized English, and prepare students to work in a specific field; and,
- **Cluster VABE/VESL** - Cluster VESL/VABE classes have a greater variety of student goals in a single class. First, all students are together, and the class has a general workplace focus with a general use of Adult Basic Education and/or English as a Second language methods. Then, the students break off into groups based on their career fields and use vocationally specific materials.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) must include education services that enable adult English language learners to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. It must include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and it may include workforce training. Additionally, the IEL/CE program must be provided in combination with IET. It is designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

English Language Acquisition

An English language acquisition program is a program of instruction designed to help eligible English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language. English language instruction may lead to attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent and to transition to postsecondary education and training

or employment.

Out-of-School Youth Pathways

Out-of-School Youth (OSY), as defined by WIOA § 3(46), can benefit from career pathways that offer holistic student support, innovative teaching and learning, and intentional collaboration. Out-of-School Youth pathways might involve the following:

- **Concurrent education and workforce preparation activities** – When offered concurrently, evidence suggests that the combination of education and workforce preparation activities and training, for a specific occupation, is beneficial. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - * Internships or job shadowing combined with GED® classes;
 - * Computer training coupled with basic skills training or literacy activities;
 - * Summer work activities coupled with contextual learning on the job;
 - * Job readiness activities (resume writing, interviewing skills, and/or applying for jobs online) combined with GED® classes or tutoring; or,
 - * Occupational skills training coupled with intensive medical terminology tutoring (i.e., Certified Nursing Assistant/ Geriatric Nursing Assistant training);
- **Tutoring, Skills Training, and Dropout Prevention** - Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma, its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities), or for a recognized postsecondary credential. Maryland offers a High School Diploma to those who successfully pass the GED® or the National External Diploma Program® (NEDP);
- **Transitional jobs** – Transitional Jobs are time-limited work experiences that are subsidized and are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history. Transitional jobs should be combined with comprehensive employment, and supportive services. They are designed to assist individuals with establishing a work history, demonstrating success in the workplace, and developing the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment; and,
- **Occupational skills training** – Training typically delivered to participants through community-college, industry partners, and/or private career schools to provide employer-driven, specific vocational skills at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Occupational skills training leads participants to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions that are required by certain industries. After completing this training, participants may receive industry recognized credentials.

Distance Learning

Distance Learning is a type of educational process that leverages technology, such that the majority of the learning takes place with the teacher and student at different locations. In distance learning, teaching and learning are not conducted in a traditional classroom setting. Instruction must be individually prescribed to appropriate students with anticipation of educational gain and goal attainment. Teachers must be highly qualified in their instructional area. Distance learning can be used to overcome transportation barriers, the high costs of traditional or in-person post-secondary education, and irregular schedules.

Transition Specialist Support

With this approach, a designated Transition Specialist, or career counseling professional, from a Title II adult education provider may collaborate with the local AJC and WIOA Title I staff in order to enhance co-enrollment while working towards applicable Title II reporting outcomes (e.g. “Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent and

Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training within one year of exit”). A Transition Specialist must be stationed at the American Job Center for a defined portion of the week (e.g. one day) to assist adult learners in applying and qualifying for training and to assess their supportive service needs, in conjunction with WIOA Title I. This connection between WIOA Title I and II allows for a smooth transfer from education to workforce and an enhanced referral and follow-up system.

Bridge Program

Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training leading to career path-employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment.



For program funding details in compliance with the Stevens Amendment, please visit <http://labor.maryland.gov/employment/dwdalfederalprogramfunding.shtml>.

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